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ABSTRACT

This paper was commissioned by the Education Commission of the States to identify the educational needs of Puerto Rican students in the mainland United States. A historical overview of Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans, and their relationships with mainland United States is presented with a focus on the Puerto Rican emigration to the mainland. The role played by public schools in the assimilation, "Americanization," and education of Puerto Rican children is discussed. Topics examined include educational issues, bilingual education, language policy, community control, school desegregation, and legal issues. The paper concludes with recommendations for policy development. A list of possible areas of conflict during the concurrent implementation of race and national origin desegregation plans is appended. (MK)

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PUERTO RICANS AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

A CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Working Papers
on Meeting the Education Needs
of Cultural Minorities

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Preface

At the 1980 annual meeting of the Education Commission of the States, a resolution was adopted directing staff "to evaluate current and possible activities of the Commission concerning the educational needs of cultural minorities, including but not limited to Hispanics, and to report to the steering committee at its fall 1980 meeting."

To some extent, the ability of the staff to evaluate current activites of the Commission was dependent on developing an understanding of what kinds of education needs are of greatest concern to cultural minorities at this time (summer/fall of 1980). That, in turn, led to the need to group cultural minorities into specific categories and to identify the education needs of each group as well as to determine which needs were common to more than one group.

The staff, therefore, commissioned six papers to be written on the education needs of the following groups: (1) Blacks; (2) Mexican Americans; (3) Cubans; (4) Puerto Ricans; (5) Indians and Native Alaskans; and (6) Asians and Pacific Islanders. The papers were written by individuals who are noted authorities and they were reviewed by individuals who also are recognized as experts on minority concerns. Because of the very short period of time between the annual meeting and the fall steering committee meeting, authors and reviewers were not asked to provide exhaustive, documented reports, but to provide their own perspectives and understanding of the current needs that exist.

A complete list of titles, authors and reviewers follows. The papers will be made available by the Commission, as long as limited supplies last, along with

a "summary report" prepared by the staff. The summary report touches briefly on some of the major concerns raised in the papers and concludes with an overview of ECS activities that appear to be most relevant. The report was prepared for the review of Commissioners to facilitate their discussion at the 1980 fall steering committee meeting of possible future directions that ECS might pursue in the years to come.

Working Papers

on the Educational Needs of

Cultural Minorities

1. The Educational Needs of Black Children, by Andrew Billingsly, President, Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland.

   Reviewer: Robert B. Hill, Director of Research, National Urban League, Washington, D.C.

2. The State of Indian Education, by Lee Antell, Director, Indian Education Project, Education Commission of the States.

   Reviewer: David L. Beaulieu, Academic Vice President, Sinte Gleska College, Rosebud, South Dakota.

3. Puerto Ricans and the Public Schools: A Critical Commentary, by Tony Baez, Program Coordinator, Midwest National Origin Desegregation Assistance Center, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

   Reviewer: Maria B. Cerda, Member of the Board, the Latino Institute, Chicago, Illinois.

4. A Report on the Cuban Students in the Dade County Public Schools, Miami Florida, by Rosa Guas Inclan, Supervisor of Bilingual Education, Dade County Public Schools, Miami, Florida.

   Reviewer: Gil Cuevas, Program Specialist, Miami Desegregation Assistance Center for National Origin (Bilingual Education), University of Miami, Miami, Florida.

5. A Legacy of Four Cultures: Education and the Mexican Americans, by Vicente Z. Serrano, Director, Interstate Migrant Education Project, Education Commission of the States.

   Reviewer: Alfredo G. de los Santos, Jr., ECS Commissioner, Vice Chancellor for Educational Development, Maricopa Community College, Phoenix, Arizona.

6. Asian and Pacific Americans: An Educational Challenge, by Siri Vongthieres, Senior Consultant, Lau Project, Colorado Department of Education, and Lawrence A. Egan, Senior Consultant, Bilingual Education Unit, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, Colorado.

   Reviewer: Masako H. Ledward, ECS Commissioner, Chairperson, Hawaii Education Counsil, Honolulu, Hawaii.

7. Summary Report, staff document prepared for the fall 1980 meeting of the steering committee of the Education Commission of the States.

Executive Summary

Contrary to the author's disclaimer that he has provided only a "cursory review" of the needs and concerns of Puerto Ricans with respect to the education system, the paper includes a wealth of substantive information of importance to education policy makers. Further, Baez helps to broaden and deepen the conventional understanding of the problems that affect this unique group of Spanish-speaking U.S. citizens. Several points are forcefully expounded.

First, Baez makes clear that the tendency to think in "Black and white" only, although no doubt an improvement over "white" only, has rendered Hispanic peoples, in some situations at least, "invisible." While the problem is perhaps most pronounced in districts where school desegregation is ongoing, it also extends to education planning, staffing and programming.

Second, Baez makes clear that Puerto Ricans arriving today are not in the same position as earlier immigrants. The economy has changed and, specifically, the number of unskilled jobs, that don't require English-language fluency, has declined relative to the number that require skilled English-speaking workers. Puerto Ricans arriving today (and other immigrants as well) do not have the same options that earlier immigrants had -- limited though they may have been.

In terms of education needs -- and appropriate responses to those needs -- this paper should be compared with that of Rosa Inclan's A Report on the Cuban Students in the Dade County Public Schools (in this same series). The contrasts between these two populations of Spanish-speaking peoples -- one group consisting of U.S. citizens from Puerto Rico, the other, refugees from communist Cuba -- is indeed food for thought.

The reviewer, Maria Cerda, has provided some further insights and underscored several of Baez' concerns: the census undercount, issues related to community involvement, and school desegregation. (With respect to school desegregation, however, Cerda points out that the problems of Hispanics must be resolved without weakening ongoing efforts and without creating dissension among racial groups). She does take issue with the author with respect to bilingual education, pointing out that his recommendations only make sense if the United States opts to view itself as a pluralistic society -- which, she feels, is highly improbable.

The reader is encouraged to review the outline included as Appendix A for an overview of the kinds of problems experienced by national origin minorities (that is, by people who are neither Black nor white), undergoing school desegregation.

Reviewer Comments

Tony Baez' contribution to the clarification of the "Puerto Rican problem" in the public schools of the United States is a brave gesture of "coger al toro por los cuernos" (taking the bull by the horns). Within the limited length of his essay he could not -- as he admits -- be "all inclusive nor comprehensive," "cover all the issues," or "provide all the answers." He promises to offer "a summary and synthesis of the most significant developments and concerns raised by Puerto Ricans regarding the plight of their young ones in the nation's public schools." In so doing, he accurately points out that the problems faced by Puerto Rican children and their families with respect to the public schools of the United States have to be analyzed within a wider framework that includes political, economic and cultural issues pertaining both to the history of Puerto Rico and the Island's relationship with the United States.

Further, Mr. Baez has succeeded in providing an excellent bibliography of resources for the reader. This bibliography must be thoughtfully examined by the serious reader in order to go beyond Mr. Baez' synthesis and summary.

Mr. Baez has effectively identified the principal issues affecting the education of Puerto Ricans in the United States. It is obvious that Baez is very knowledgeable about the subject as well as deeply caring about the matters he discusses. It would be unfortunate if the reader were to allow him/herself to be diverted from the substance of the paper by the author's occasional indulgence in what could be interpreted as subjective comments such as, "in their arrogance," "America's obsession." Again, perhaps due to the wide scope of his

theme, he makes general statements that could have been strengthened by references. Phrases such as "most school historians will agree," "significant... statistical studies," "the information available indicates," and "the record will show," should have been followed by an indication to the reader of the sources used to reach such conclusions. The author does, however, reference most of his conclusions.

I wish to underscore the importance of the census undercount as it affects not only implementation of educational strategy for Puerto Ricans but also because of its economic, political and social implications for the quality of life for Puerto Ricans. It perhaps should have been given separate treatment (rather than being incorporated as a subtopic of Puerto Rican migration).

The remedy of community control is presented all too briefly. The struggle for decentralization in New York City, and the way in which political clout was wielded against the community, are not described sufficiently. This issue is of such a complex nature that it deserves separate treatment elsewhere.

On the theme of school desegregation, as related to bilingual education, the author begins to enlighten the reader about why he considers bilingual education and desegregation as compatible processes that could be jointly implemented without endangering either. He succeeds in presenting the ideological or conceptual compatibility between bilingual education and desegregation. However, the analysis does not provide sufficient operational direction to facilitate policy development.

Policy makers need to be educated in both the conceptual and operational dimensions of the two issues. Because Puerto Ricans and Blacks have not shared the same history, they find themselves at different stages of development and, as a result, have different priorities. Therefore, strategies to

equalize educational opportunities must be different for the two communities. Policy makers have in the past not recognized this simple fact and developed desegregation plans that unfairly burden one group or the other creating unnecessary tension between the two. It is imperative that this common search for equalization not be allowed to create dissension among racial groups.

Baez devotes a considerable part of his essay to the emergence and implementation of bilingual education. Some readers may be confused by the author's distinction between "the assimilationist and compensatory model of bilingual education" and "the type of bilingual education all Puerto Ricans propose."

The recommendations must be seen in the light of the conflictive nature of the three models discussed:

- The melting pot model, without bilingual education.
- The melting post model, with transitional bilingual education.
- The model of America as a pluralistic society in which minorities can maintain their language and culture without being left our or isolated.

For policy development and implementation, I wish to underscore the conflict inherent in any of the first two "melting pot" models if the author's recommendations were to be accepted for implementation. His recommendations are only viable if and when the United States opts to define itself as a culturally and linguistically pluralistic society.

Tony Baez' essay must be understood as the point of view of a Puerto Rican who endorses a culturally and linguistically pluralistic model for United States society. I also endorse that model. Regardless of the decision made by Puerto Ricans and the Congress on the political destiny of the Island -- be it a continuation of the present Commonwealth status, statehood, or independence -- the fact is that there are over two million Puerto Ricans living in this country, as citizens, most of whom may not go back for permanent residence to

the Island.

Pending a radical change from the current ethnocentric monolingual perspective prevalent in this country, policies will remain remedial providing at best survival strategies for the education of Puerto Ricans.

Introduction

This brief essay is no more than a cursory review of the experiences of Puerto Ricans with the public schools in the mainland United States. It is not all-inclusive nor comprehensive. It does not pretend to cover all the issues nor to provide all the answers. Rather, it is a summary and synthesis of the most significant developments and concerns raised by Puerto Ricans in the mainland -- and by those returning to Puerto Rico -- regarding the plight of their young ones in this nation's public schools.

At present, the political and economic relations between Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans in the mainland, and the U.S. government are of a delicate and complex nature. As we shall show, it is this condition which characterizes and distinguishes the Puerto Ricans from other Hispanic groups in the country.

We urge the reader to give thoughtful consideration to the information offered here and strongly suggest that additional readings be made on the subject. This is necessary given the intensity of the current debate on Puerto Rico and the rapidly changing sequence of social and political events. Moreover, it is impossible to deal fairly in these pages with the diverse and often opposing views held by Puerto Ricans and their representative organizations on the political situation in the island. The resolution of the latter's political status may well be among the most significant events of this decade in U.S. history, and should not be underestimated. Current political science literature is full of such warnings. For example, the Foreign Affairs journal, a scholarly and reliable source, recently declared:

> In Puerto Rico, where the statehood debate may ultimately present the United States with its most difficult Latin American-related domestic and international problem in the 1980's, the lines of potential conflict took new shape in 1979. Indeed, Puerto Rico deserves our special attention precisely because it is that part of our Latin American foreign policy most neglected by analysts and policymakers alike.[1]

Puerto Ricans are also attracting considerable attention within the U.S. social, political and educational domestic scene, generally because they are a significant part of the numerically increasing Hispanic minority which preoccupies policy makers and more specifically, because they are already a force which cannot be ignored nor neglected in some of the nation's most important urban centers.

In conclusion, this essay will review the social-historical background of Puerto Ricans and the treatment of Puerto Rican students in U.S. schools. Furthermore, we will comment on the expectations Puerto Ricans have of the public schools and what they perceive as the most pressing educational issues of the present--e.g., bilingual education, language policy, desegregation, dropouts, and other forms of discriminatory policies negatively affecting the education of Puerto Ricans. Finally, some recommendations for appropriate educational planning will be offered.

Social Historical Overview

The first four hundred years of Spanish colonization of the island of Puerto Rico culminated in the emergence of a new nation: Puerto Rico. The gradual mixing of peoples of various cultural and racial backgrounds was decisive in the formation of a people with a heterogeneous racial appearance but with unquestionably similar cultural and linguistic traits. Consequently -- and especially before the eyes of color conscious Americans -- some Puerto

Ricans may look white, others Black, and others somewhat in between ("tanned" or "olive skinned").

The 19th century was particularly an era of political formation for the people of the island. Islanders were considerably influenced by the wars of independence against the Spanish empire waged by their emerging Latin American neighbor nations. Eventually they would also make attempts at political independence which, while unsuccessful, resulted in a greater measure of social, political, and economic autonomy.

During the Spanish American War of 1898, Puerto Rico was occupied by U.S. troops. As a result of the Treaty of Paris in 1899, the island was ceded by Spain to the United States as a spoil of war. Initially, the American presence in the Island was perceived by some Puerto Rican leaders as favorable to their quest for political independence from Spain. But the United States had other plans for Puerto Rico. It was, militarily prime, strategic territory, particularly on the eve of U.S. economic and political expansionism in the Caribbean. Since, Puerto Rico has been considered by the U.S. as a territorial possession. However, the people of Puerto Rico and the international community prefer to classify the relationship between the two countries as of a "colonial nature."

On The Status Question

Puerto Ricans' concern over the political status of the island has been noticeable since the early period of American colonization. Political parties emerged proposing annexation to the U.S., i.e., statehood. Others continued their attempts at separation or independence from the new colonial power. A third position was one that advocated an association with the U.S. within the framework of a locally-run, autonomous form of government. These three approaches to the resolution of the status issue have survived up to the present.

Historically significant was also the fact that Americans had assumed, for the first time in their history, responsibility for the governance of a nation of people of color, who spoke a language different from English. The truth is, they were hesitant as to how to proceed. Thus, in their arrogance, they decided to force upon the new subjects the American way of life. The institution of the school was singled out as the most important tool for "civilizing," "Americanizing," and "Christianizing" the Puerto Ricans. Ironically, Christianity had roots in Puerto Rico since at least a century before the Mayflower.

The act of civilizing Puerto Ricans, it was decided, would occur through the colonizers' language and, as early as 1900, English become the official language of public school instruction in Puerto Rico.[2] In time, this action would become a highly emotional issue in the island and it remains the cause of considerable debate, albeit there was an official return to Spanish instruction in 1948 and English is now taught as a second language.

In 1917 the U.S. Congress, over the opposition of local island leadership and the Puerto Rican Chamber of Delegates, enacted the Jones Act granting American citizenship to all Puerto Ricans and other minor measures of autonomy. Puerto Ricans were perplexed by an action that suggested a step towards statehood at a time when Congress was clearly against the notion of a "colored" state joining the Union.

During the decades that followed, debate on the status issue and rejection of the imposition of the English language led to considerable political upheaval. New political parties were born and nationalism characterized the mood of the 1930s and early 40s. But it was not until 1952, through the leadership of proponents of autonomy, that a greater degree of local autonomy would be granted and a Puerto Rican Constitution forged. The "Estado Libre Asociado"

(Free Associated-State) was created as an attempt to legitimize the relationship between the imperial metropolis and the colony. Since then, Puerto Rico has been known as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rican Emigration to the Mainland U.S.A.

Puerto Rican social historian Manuel Maldonado-Dennis has written of the Puerto Rican emigration to the States:

> There has not been, perhaps, a more transcendent event for the destiny of the Puerto Rican nation than the massive exodus of more than half a million Puerto Ricans during the historical period immediately following the end of World War II. We can say, with no fear of being mistaken, that the social process begun in 1945 appears to be an irreversible one, and that the social history of Puerto Rico has to be re-examined in light of this emigration phenomenon and its consequences.[3]

Maldonado-Dennis was definitely right. No other phenomenon in the history of Puerto Rico has so strongly impacted the lives of all Puerto Ricans. Before we proceed with an analysis of emigration and its consequences for Puerto Rico and its people, a few paragraphs regarding its causes are in order.

The proximity between the continental U.S. and the island of Puerto Rico made it possible for Puerto Ricans to travel to the mainland as far back as the mid-19th century. At the time, Puerto Rican and other Latin American leaders sought refuge in cities like New York, while plotting against Spain's rule. However, it was not until after the Jones Act that significant numbers of Puerto Ricans emigrated. Economic factors, more than anything else, appeared to have motivated the emigration prior to the 1940s.

The larger migration of the mid 1940s, though, was a response to a combination of more complex factors. First, the fact that U.S. government intervention policies and American capital investment -- especially during the 1920s and 1930s -- forced a shift from a semi-feudal agricultural society to

one based predominantly on a one-crop (sugar cane) agricultural system dominated by absentee capital. Secondly, the coming into power of El Partido Popular (Popular Democratic Party) in 1940, brought with it an escalation of poorly planned industrialization which conflicted with agricultural development and forced an internal island migration from rural areas to the cities, creating a surplus urban population of a proletariat with agricultural skills.

And, third, there was the intentional local government policy of creating an "escape valve," i.e., promoting emigration to the states as a solution to its "problem" of a surplus work force. There are obviously other reasons but the ones listed were clearly the most influential. For example, we should not understate the fact that a developing technology during World War II accelerated the revolution of air transportation that continues to facilitate the movement of Puerto Ricans to and from the island. Father Joseph Fitzpatrick, in his scholarly study of the Puerto Rican emigration writes:

> The Puerto Ricans have come for the most part in the first great airborne migration of people from abroad; they are decidedly newcomers of the aviation age. A Puerto Rican can travel from San Juan to New York in less time than a New Yorker could travel from Coney Island to Times Square a century ago. They are the first group to come in large numbers from a different cultural background, but who are, nevertheless, citizens of the United States.[4]

By 1940 some 70,000 Puerto Ricans lived in the mainland U.S., and in another ten years, the number had quadrupled to 300,000. By the 1960s the Puerto Rican population in the United States reached 887,000. In 1970, persons of Puerto Rican birth or parentage living in the United States numbered at least 1.4 million, with the figure growing to 1.7 by 1975.[5] These census figures, however, have been disputed by observers of the Puerto Rican community and various other organizations such as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.[6] Consequently, the U.S. Census Bureau conceded its data-gathering system to be

seriously flawed and admitted to an estimated 7.7% minority undercount in the 1970 Census. For the moment, it is sufficient to say that a more realistic population estimate, given the undercount factor, would be close to two million Puerto Ricans living in the U.S., of whom 1,250,000 reside in the greater New York area. More Puerto Ricans reside in New York City than in San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico.[8]

The census data gatering process has become a major issue of concern for Puerto Ricans since it affects practices such as revenue sharing and standard formulas for the allocation of financial assistance in education and other public services.[9] The 1980 Census reports are again under criticism. A recent federal court decision (September 1980), in response to Detroit's challenge of the preliminary 1980 Census report, has mandated an adjustment to the Census figures based on a finding of a "minority" undercount. Puerto Ricans have reason to believe that inaccurate data has resulted from the latest Census and are already taking action, together with other Hispanics, to correct the matter.

Social-Economic and Political Life of Mainland Puerto Ricans

The arrival of Puerto Ricans in the United States, particularly in New York City where approximately 57% of them reside, was not without the enmities faced by other early immigrant groups. Being U.S. citizens at their arrival did not change anything. Puerto Ricans were, and to this date, are still considered a foreign group. Upon arrival, more often than not they inherited the poorest section of the cities they settled in.

Study after study shows that Puerto Ricans constitute the lowest rung of the social ladder of U.S. society, a condition further compounded by the racial discrimination that permeates and corrodes this society and condemns all the so-called "minorities" within it to a precarious existence in the heart of

affluence. It is no wonder that Puerto Ricans share a common destiny of racial and social discrimination with "non-white" minorities such as Native Americans, Chicanos, Afro-Americans and Asian-Americans.[10]

Puerto Ricans are generally poorer, have less education, are more dependent on government support, and have less chance to escape poverty conditions than most Americans. There are, certainly, exceptions to this condition among Puerto Ricans. The preceding facts, by themselves, can render a negative image of the Puerto Ricans, especially when there is a tendency among Americans to perceive such realities as reflective of the "nature" of the group in question. As suggested by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, these facts by themselves can create a distorted image -- an image of an entire people who are uniformly poor, uneducated, and welfare-prone.[11]

There are fundamental differences between the Puerto Rican immigration and that of other earlier immigrant groups. These can be better understood in context with the economic and historic function traditionally played by immigrants to the United States. They must also be understood in terms of time. As Dr. Samuel Betances well describes:

> Puerto Ricans come to the United States at a time when a strong back and willingness to work is not enough to find employment which offers opportunities for upward mobility in the society. One sociologist suggested in an article that Puerto Ricans might have come to this country at the "wrong time."[12]

Indeed, the mode of production in the United States was changing rapidly during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Monopoly capital characterized the economy as compared to competitive capital. This also meant a change in the forces of production. The opportunities open to earlier immigrants to become owners of their own labor power were no longer there. While it may appear as if the role of Puerto Rican immigrants would be similar to that of other

immigrants, the outcome of the dialectic between Puerto Ricans and the economic system in the United States would be necessarily different due to the differences in the material conditions of society.[13] This was also the case with rural Blacks moving into the cities. In other words, and as explained by Dr. Clara Rodriguez, the job market

> ..had a decreasing demand, for low-skilled jobs were being eliminated by automation, others were protected by unions, others were moving to the suburbs, while suburbanites were taking many jobs in the city. Thus Puerto Ricans moved into the only jobs available: low-wage work in the service sector (as waiters, kitchen help, porters, and hospital workers), and in light manufacturing (as sewing machine operators). In short, the jobs nobody else wanted. These tended to be low paying and the sectors in which they were found tended to be declining or unstable.
>
> Not only were jobs few, low paying and often insecure, but once a job was secured mobility was also bad. Where could you go from being a sewing machine operator?[14]

Except for a small percentage of Puerto Ricans that entered the steel and automobile industry in places like Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, Dr. Rodriguez' analysis holds true for most Puerto Rican settlements other than New York.

Let us also be mindful of the bleak picture of exploitation and poverty, as well as poor working conditions, suffered by the close to 50,000 Puerto Rican agricultural emigrants that work on the farms of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Florida, for eight months or less, returning later to Puerto Rico.[15] Since our interest in this paper is the larger group of urban immigrants and, especially, their relationship to the schools, we will not expand on the particular experience of the agricultural worker.

In summary, the conditions that characterize the social and economic living standards of Puerto Ricans in the United States today, are a direct

consequence of the impact made by the social-economic and material relations prevalent in the host society at the time of their arrival. The more complex cultural and psychological effects of such conditions on Puerto Ricans are yet to be fully understood due to the short length of their presence in the U.S. and their continual travel back and forth to Puerto Rico. More than 150,000 Puerto Ricans have returned to the island since 1970. While this is not a phenomenon of the 70s, it is the first time that such a reverse migration trend has sustained itself over a prolonged period.[16] Such migratory flow between Puerto Rico and the continental U.S.A. appears to grow or diminish in accordance with the trends affecting the mainland economy, i.e., during periods of rapid accumulation of capital in the U.S., Puerto Ricans immigrate and, during periods of economic recession or depression, the inverse happens.[17]

The Problems of Adaptation and Assimilation

Adaptation and integration into the host society was never easy for any immigrant group. It has been, perhaps, more difficult for the Puerto Ricans if we consider the immigration dialectics previously discussed. The slowness of the adaptation and integrative processes have more than occasionally resulted in the creation of a class of marginal, oppressed and alienated people. Says Diane Ravitch about the experiences of immigrant groups in New York City:

> ...the immigrant arrives poor, lives in crowded slums with others like himself, suffers discrimination and terrible living conditions, and (as a group) produces a disproportionate number of criminals and paupers; the native blames the immigrants for bringing crime, poverty, and slums to the city, discriminates against him, and wonders whether this particular group can be assimilated into American society.[18]

This too is repeated in the Puerto Rican experience. The result of such drastic social and cultural dislocation is manifested in many ways: alienation, violence, hostility and confused identities. It shows, for example, when we

study the mental health of the Puerto Rican. Fitzpatrick and Robert E. Gould indicated that the percentage of mental illness among Puerto Ricans in New York city was extremely high -- 102.5 of every 100,000 Puerto Ricans suffered from mental illness in contrast to 34.5 per 100,000 for the entire state of New York. Some of the causes given by the research were "stress from migration, including uprooting, adjustment to a new way of life..." etc.[19]

Dr. Maldonado-Dennis argues that:

> ...this high incidence of mental illness is the product of intolerable situations created by the clash and conflict with a society that disowns and scorns us. It is worth the effort to stress the poisonous effects of extreme poverty on these mental syndromes.[20]

Contradictions in the ideologies that govern American treatment of immigrants adds to the complexities inherent in the attempts at understanding the adaptation and integrative phenomenon. On the one hand we hear of the "melting pot" theory and of America's political-cultural imperative to assimilate its ethnic minorities into the U.S. culture. On the other hand, history shows that Americans have consistently rejected peoples of color. They have never been invited to "melt"; nor have the Puerto Ricans. They fall within a classification of "non-whites" or "ethnic minority" definitions born out of America's insistence on defining everyone along racial lines. A measure of acceptance in American society is the degree to which one "does not look Puerto Rican."

Nonetheless, American institutions continue their attempts at "Americanization, i.e., at forcing upon the Puerto Ricans the values and ethnics of the "American way of life." Hence, to be accepted, a Puerto Rican must adopt the norms and values of a society that denies his or her identity.[21] Dr. Eduardo Seda-Bonilla has described the nature of the contradictions inherent in the American effort at assimilating its ethnic minorities when he distinguishes between cultural assimilation and social assimilation. Seda-Bonilla argues

that the "melting-pot" analysis does not apply in the interpretation of the migratory experience of Puerto Ricans or that of their mainland born descendants:

> Those claiming that social assimilation of the Puerto Rican is a "matter of time," of learning the language and the customs of Americans, are misled or try to deceive us. Blacks and Mexicans have been in the United States for a longer period of time and are culturally more assimilated than the Italian, Irish, etc., who arrived later. Culturally, they were all assimilated; nonetheless, Blacks and Mexicans were not <u>socially assimilated</u> and remain marginalized by the (American) racist barrier. Social assimilation implies acceptance of ethnic groups in a plan of equity. Cultural assimilation is simply acculturation.[22]

Seda-Bonilla echoes the sentiment of most Puerto Ricans as they contemplate their condition in American Society. More recently, with the escalation of the status debate, the election of a pro-statehood government, and the development of a socialist-oriented independence movement which has successfully attracted international attention to the colonial status of the island and its pressing economic crisis, the U.S. has found itself obligated to increase its provision of economic assistance to Puerto Rico to prevent a possible social upheaval that could move it toward political independence. Although eighty-two years in Puerto Rico, the U.S. is yet to have a well formulated idea of what Puerto Rico's future will be like. If any, its only policy is that of escalating the Americanization of the island's population for no specific purpose other than practicing a modern, more subtle way of colonial control.

Dr. Gordon K. Lewis, in his monumental study of Puerto Rican society, wrote:

> ...as American influence, combined with that of the forces of modern machine technology, spreads wider and wider, must it of necessity destroy the cultural diversity of a pluralistic universe and replace it with a drab uniformity?[23]

Up to this point we have shown how an understanding of socio-historical, economic and political factors is essential to the interpretation of the Puerto Rican experience in the mainland U.S.A. We have also discussed assimilation and Americanization as other phenomena of importance in this interpretation. In the pages that follow we will see how all these forces converge at the schools, and the role the schools have assumed in the assimilation, Americanization, education and more often, mis-education of Puerto Ricans. We submit to the reader the tenet that an adequate interpretation of the role of the schools, and solutions to the problems faced by the schools, in educating the Puerto Rican, cannot be achieved independent from, or without regard to, the social, historical and political reality that affect the Puerto Rican people. Again, we draw from Dr. Lewis' study:

> The Puerto Rican child, from the beginning, has been taught American rather than Puerto Rican history. His attributes have been built up in a colonial atmosphere, where the mass media have portrayed to the populace a culture that is not their own and to which they have been taught to attribute everything that is worthwhile in their experience. The very linguistic symbols of merit and authority become those of the dominant power; thus the Puerto Rican student still manages, only too frequently, to address his teacher as "Mister" rather than "Maestro" or "professor," as if the teacher were an American.[24]

Schools have thus been extremely important to the process of Americanizing the Puerto Rican student on the island and the U.S. mainland -- an extension to Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans of America's obsession with the use of schools for socializing the poor and children of newcomers.

Some school historians will suggest that this view of the schools as implementors of the "melting pot" theory was no more than a humanitarian effort to apply the "American dream" to the new urban schools.[25] Other less kind

to stay and re-settle, i.e., with minimal possibilities of returning to the homeland. Puerto Ricans are a people with a national culture tied historically, ethnically, and linguistically to Latin American culture.[30] They are in constant contact with their homeland and come and go as they please. Moreover, they are American citizens from a territorial possession of the U.S. government: one which financially subsidizes an island education system where the official language of instruction is Spanish.

When we consider the role of the schools, and their political and ideological mandates, many questions surface: (1) what are Puerto Ricans to do when they do not control their own economy in Puerto Rico or in the United States; (2) when they appear to be doomed to continuance at the lower strata of the U.S. social-class system; (3) when the only institution accessible to them with a promise of upward mobility is the schools; and (4) when said institution insists on depriving them of their language and cultural identity? Can Puerto Ricans rely on the schools to do for them what they appeared to have never done for any other immigrant group? There are no easy answers to these questions.

Nevertheless, the record will show that Puerto Ricans have come to place great faith on the potential of the schools to serve as their "equalizer" and, to some degree, as possible maintainers of their language and culture. Puerto Rican leadership in the states appear to see the schools as an institution capable of undergoing change; one that can accommodate some of the needs and expectations of Puerto Ricans; that can play a positive -- while not all-fulfilling -- role in facilitating upward economic and social mobility as well as language and cultural development. Whether this is something the schools can achieve by themselves is questionable at the present time. It is not likely that without parallel positive changes in the socio-economic conditions

affecting the lives of Puerto Ricans in the larger society, schools could be made to work on their behalf.

What Have the Schools Accomplished?

Accomplishments are often measured in two ways: statistically and, somewhat subjectively, by the degree to which school-community relations are positively affecting eduational achievement. In the case of Puerto Ricans both of these measures paint a grim picture -- one of failure. Schools have not been very kind to Puerto Rican students, nor to the Puerto Rican community. There are striking parallels between the statistics that reflect the social and economic conditions of the Puerto Ricans and those that reflect their educational achievement. That is, in the same manner in which mainland Puerto Ricans are found at the lowest strata of the social and economic hierarchies they are also found at the lowest rung of the educational ladder.

Significant enough are statistical studies showing that more than 50% of all Puerto Ricans entering the public schools never finish high school; drop-out rates for Puerto Ricans are 31% in Philadelphia, 70% in Chicago, 80% in Boston and 21% in New York; "delayed education" figures reveal that approximately 40% of Puerto Rican students, ages 14 to 17, are still in elementary grades as compared to 17% for all U.S. students in the same age bracket. Puerto Rican students have a median of 8.4 years of schooling compared with 11.5 for white American-born students and less than 25% of Puerto Rican children in need of specialized language instructions or bilingual education are receiving such services.

Increased segregation of Puerto Rican students exists in minority segregated schools. In 1970, only 2% of mainland Puerto Ricans, ages 25 to 44, had completed a college education.[31] The list of statistical findings reflecting the dramatic contrasts in education attainment between Puerto Ricans and

other groups is extensive. For a more comprehensive statistical report the reader is advised to read the United States Commission on Civil Rights report previously cited in this paper (see note 5).

In the area of school-community relations, available information indicates that, with few exceptions, school districts continue to be very closed to, and uncooperative with, Puerto Ricans. How can Puerto Ricans assist or participate in the decision-making processes, or in the planning and implementation of education programs for their children, when the doors of the schools are closed? Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans will not desist in their efforts to influence the schools. The record shows that soon after their arrival in the U.S.A., Puerto Ricans formed organizations and joined other groups seeking school reform.

Unfortunately, many Puerto Rican organizations find themselves in conflict with the schools rather than in a relationship of cooperation. This condition is documented by the increasing number of administrative and legal complaints filed by Puerto Ricans through government law enforcement agencies and the courts. A 1979 survey by the author of a sample of cities with significant Puerto Rican populations revealed that most Puerto Rican communities, occasionally in consort with other Hispanic groups and Blacks, have been involved in civil rights litigation against their school districts.

Generally, however, the typical Puerto Rican parent is not involved with the schools at all. More than 80 percent of them do not speak English, a fact that further impedes their involvement with an English-only institution which, except for the more recent exception of those individual schools with bilingual programs, has done little to bridge the language gap. The complexity of the issues affecting schools, particularly in larger urban settings, is also an

alienating force. Most Puerto Rican parents have a limited understanding of how American society functions -- structurally and organizationally -- and find it difficult to identify with issues such as school finance, desegregation, affirmative action, discrimination prevention laws, etc. The failure of school districts to set up structures for involvement aimed at enhancing parent's input further compounds the problem.

Remedies and Other Educational Issues Affecting Puerto Rican Education

Puerto Ricans question the efficacy of schools although they are often evidently confused as to what changes to suggest. This has been a major area of concern within Puerto Rican communities: What are the best remedies for education problems? What should Puerto Ricans advocate for? What solutions or remedies should they reject? Let us now review some of the most commonly known remedies for the Puerto Rican's "educational problems."

Bilingual Education

During the last two decades a "bilingual education movement" emerged, gained strength and support from communities and the government, and attracted national attention to the point of promising to be among the most heatedly discussed educational reform movements of the 80s. To understand the Puerto Ricans' stand on bilingual education as a remedy for past and present education negligence, and their support for "bilingualism," we need to place its evolution in proper historical perspective.

Christopher Jencks, et. al., wrote in their extensive statistical study of inequality that:

> The basic strategy of the war on poverty during the 1960s was to try to give everyone entering the job market or any other competitive arena comparable skills. This meant placing great emphasis on education. Many people imagined that if schools could equalize people's

> cognitive skills this would equalize their bargaining power as adults. In such a system nobody would end up very poor or presumably -- very rich.[32]

They later argued that such a strategy of reform failed because it rested upon a number of wrong assumptions. A review of all the assumptions is not necessary at this moment, but one must be singled out for purposes of this analysis.

The assertion that schools can act as economic equalizers is something we get from the proponents of the "egalitarian function" of schools. The "egalitarians" assumed that a culture of poverty and deprivation exist within Puerto Rican and other ethnic minorities. Therefore, schools should eliminate the inequality between the students in a school in order to ensure equal results from the schooling experience. Compensatory education surfaced as the answer and, as happened with the social poverty programs, government embarked on a systematic attempt to correct economic inequalities in the schools.

No serious attempt was made then, nor has it been to date, to respond to the critical questions raised by many educators and observers of schools: Can the significant and pervasive system of racial, class and sexual stratification be significantly modified by "equal schooling?"[23] Are remedial education programs, which place blame on the poor for their failure in the schools, an adequate solution?

The bilingual movement evolved within the context of the compensatory education effort. The ethnic language minority family's failure to teach their children English was to be corrected by the schools. Hence, it made sense for government to support the developing concept of bilingual education as long as it meant a quicker and more expedient manner of eliminating the problem, i.e., the child's usage of their home language rather than English.

All would be fine if the bilingual effort stayed within the assimilationist view of the schools. Even the teaching of the home language of the child would be acceptable if used as an instrument for the quick acquisition of English and more rapid assimilation to American life styles and values.

The Congressional enactment of the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965), was a codification of the ideologies of compensatory education and the assimilationist function of schools. It was, and is today, an English-language-development act. At the time, some ethnic language minority groups did accept the compensatory bilingual education model. Today, many are striving for change.

The Puerto Ricans, long before the Bilingual Education Act, and ever since its enactment, consistently argued for a model of "bilingualism" in which English would be taught -- but not at the expense of (or through the suppression) their language, Spanish. It is an approach that rejects the racist underpinning of both the compensatory ("culture of poverty") and mainstream-into-English (assimilationist) approaches. Their efforts on behalf of English language acquisition and the preservation and development of Spanish is well documented. So are their efforts beyond language teaching, i.e., the tenet that schools must adjust the system of learning and school operation to be responsive to the cultural characteristics of Puerto Rican children.[34]

Following their arrival in most U.S. cities, efforts appear to have been made to deal with the "Puerto Rican problem" in the schools. This is evidenced by early reports on the issue in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Cleveland and as far west as Chicago and Milwaukee. In all instances, the responses of the school systems involved were within the framework of the

assimilationist and compensatory ideologies previously discussed. The farthest they went was to recognize the need for specialized language instruction. English-as-a-Second Language became the only response. Three good examples of the rejection by Puerto Ricans of the aforementioned ideologies, in three very distinct and separate settings, merit special mention.

First, in the initial City-Wide Conference of the New York Puerto Rican Community, in April 1967, Puerto Ricans expressed indignation over their status in terms of education accomplishment and demanded: (1) bilingual programs -- not only as an instrument for learning English, but also for developing and preserving the knowledge of Spanish among Puerto Rican children; (2) the introduction of courses in Puerto Rican culture, literature, and history; (3) a much greater involvement of the Puerto Rican community in the planning of school programs for Puerto Rican children; (4) the hiring of Puerto Ricans to work in the public schools as teachers and paraprofessionals; and (5) representation on the board of education.[35]

Second, in 1975, the National Conference on the Educational Needs of the Puerto Rican Student was held in Cleveland. It was an all-Puerto Rican assembly with representation from Puerto Rico, the New England area, New York, the midwest region, California, and as far west as Hawaii. Again, Puerto Ricans echoed the recommendations of previous Puerto Rican conferences -- similar to our New York example -- and reaffirmed their commitment to "bilingualism" for Puerto Ricans in the U.S.[36]

The third example is that of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1974 in a relatively small Puerto Rican community in the midwest, Puerto Ricans worked with a larger Hispanic group in the city (Mexican Americans) to convince the school district that there were better ways of dealing with language education than English-as-a-Second-Language and than the district's token attempt at providing

transitional bilingual education programs with federal funds. They organized and

> In May of that year, after long and protracted negotiations between the City-Wide Bilingual Bicultural Advisory Committee (CWBBAC) and the Milwaukee school administration, a series of recommendations were forwarded to the school board which approved them unanimously. Among the most important of these was a motion supporting the concept and implementation of a developmental (maintenance) bilingual bicultural education program in Spanish and, if needed and wanted by parents, in other languages as well. This new thrust-away from a strictly transitional approach to another whose purpose was to develop functional, coordinate bilinguality in students -- constituted a milestone for Milwaukee public schools. In addition, the district enabled the program to continue and expand by adding local funds in anticipation of an eventual reduction in the level of federal financial support.[37]

There should be no question as to the type of bilingual education all Puerto Ricans propose, regardless of where they are located in the U.S. mainland. First- and second-generation Puerto Ricans alike support the principle of Spanish language and cultural maintenance and development. The question of language and culture is, as is the case with most other Puerto Rican concerns, intertwined with the Puerto Rican migration and the group's political experience. Language and cultural retention has become a traditional mark of identity for the group in a society which has failed to socially and economically integrate the Puerto Rican. As stated by Fitzpatrick:

> In the continual movement back and forth between Puerto Rico and the mainland, loss of Spanish by a Puerto Rican leaves him handicapped in the land of his Fathers and his family. Furthermore, an increasing awareness of the value of bilingualism in any tongue and in any situation has led to a greater concern for helping a child to regain the language of his parents.[38]

During the mid 70s the government of Puerto Rico, struck by the cold fact that many children of returning Puerto Ricans had lost their native language, began aggressive lobbying in Washington, D.C. to extend the application of the

Title VII Bilingual Act to Puerto Ricans on the island. This was accomplished in 1978. Thus, Puerto Rico can request federal financial assistance to provide bilingual education to some 67,000 Puerto Rican students -- almost 10% of the island's school enrollment! The emphasis of their bilingual programs is transition from English to Spanish.[39]

It makes no sense then to insist on applying the assimilationist and compensatory model of bilingual education to this group of American citizens who in a matter of hours can transplant themselves from an all English-speaking world to a Spanish one and vice-versa. Furthermore, it makes no sense to suppress and limit their children's Spanish learning in the mainland when it is evident that they can learn in both, a practice further sanctioned by government action. Dr. Bruce Gaarder's advice takes special relevance with regard to Puerto Ricans:

> Not until 1973 did it occur to me that the only rationale either needed or worthy of being heeded for teaching a child through its mother tongue is the simple proposition that it is a fundamental human right for every people to rear -- and educate -- its children in its own image and language.[40]

Notwithstanding the achievements made by Puerto Ricans in their quest for bilingual education, a number of serious problems and limitations are yet to be fully addressed. Most important is the danger of embracing bilingual education as a panacea for the cure of all wrongs affecting the education of the Puerto Rican student. A review of implementation efforts will reveal that what now prevails are bilingual programs of the transitional/compensatory type designed to serve only those students eligible under exclusionary criteria which gives preference to students with more acute limited English language proficiency.

Some observers of bilingual education have noted that, under present federal and state guidelines, less than 25 percent of Puerto Rican and Hispanic students in a typical school district qualify for and receive some form of language instruction or bilingual education, while the other 75 percent receive no specialized or culturally relevant education. Dr. Isidro Lucas argued, in his dropout study of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, that it is this population that is more prone to "dropping-out." These students are often second generation Puerto Ricans born and reared in the mainland U.S.A. with a greater sensitivity towards social rejection in the hostile environments of school and community. They corresponded to 60 percent of the 71 percent dropout rate found by the Lucas study.[41]

The overt emphasis on bilingual education as resolving problems of language minority students has caused neglect for the larger population of non-bilingual program participants who are often more adversely affected by poor education services. When questioned about the availability of educational programs aimed at meeting the needs of this Puerto Rican student population, school officials will simply argue that they are treated just like any other student. No specialized information is available regarding their education needs. Generally, no particular planning takes place with their needs in mind.

Other neglected Puerto Rican students are those who have physical or emotional handicaps further compounded by the lack of English language ability. While some efforts have been made to procure adequate diagnosis and program placement, their education needs remain largely unmet.

Recent compliance reviews by the Office for Civil Rights, litigation, and the recent re-opening of the Diana v. State Board of Education case

(Civ. No. 70-37-AFR N.D. Cal. June 18, 1973) have revealed, among other things, that school officials, in the absence of bilingual special education programs, placed Puerto Rican and other Hispanic students with identified handicaps in regular transitional bilingual education classrooms. Attempts are being made to stop such practices wherever discovered. With the enactment in 1975 of P.L. 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act), Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have sought funding for research on education methodologies aimed at the treatment of language minority handicapped students, and for the establishment of programs to train bilingual special education instructors and diagnosticians. Bilingual special education appears to be a major item of concern for the 80s.

Puerto Ricans are also cognizant of the distortions of the bilingual education concept during its implementation. The resistance of school officials continues to be an obstacle to the implementation of bilingual education. Most school districts have decided to implement only transitional bilingual programs (after lengthy battles with local Puerto Rican and other language groups). Their decision was often prompted by mandatory court orders, state legislation and the enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with respect to national origin non-discrimination compliance requirements by the Office for Civil Rights.

Such resistance has led to poor implementation efforts reflected in: (1) lack of adequate local funding; (2) poor efforts at securing out-of-district funding; (3) lack of adequately trained and certified bilingual personnel; (4) non-bilingual staff assigned to teach bilingual classes; (5) failure to secure supportive bilingual personnel; (6) limiting program entrance criteria; (7) overt emphasis on program exit criteria; and (8) acts of sabotage to disrupt

the continuity of bilingual programs (periodic interruptions, staff lay-offs, and unnecessary movement of programs from one school to another with intent to irritate parents and community leaders. Some of these items may appear to the reader as exaggerated, but have indeed occurred and are documented in the proceedings of bilingual litigation and Office for Civil Rights reviews of districts with Puerto Rican and other Hispanic student populations.

Puerto Ricans are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that, by itself, if disassociated from overall school reform -- i.e., financial, programmatic, cultural, organizational reform, etc. -- bilingual education will not be effective. Nor will it resolve new inequalities emerging with changes in the schools as they are impacted by changes in the general society. Various studies and reports on the urban education experience of Puerto Ricans have already proven this to be true.[41]

Language Policy

Some remarks on the issue of language policy are necessary before bringing closure to this section. A major effort is being launched by Puerto Ricans advocating the development, enactment, implementation, and evaluation of language policy favorable to the principle of bilingualism. It is attracting the attention of other language minorities, ethnic/racial minorities in general, and governmental officials.[43]

The thrust of the movement is that the United States should change its language policy; that like most other countries in the world, it should promote and support the maintenance, development, survival and reconstruction of the languages of its ethnic minorities. This movement appears to be gaining support despite a parallel conservative movement by other segments of American society that adhere to the "melting pot" theory. It is possible that Puerto

Ricans will play a major role in further refining this new ideological proposition, given the uniqueness of their political relationship with the United States. It is unlikely that Puerto Ricans, even if the island becomes a state of the Union, would give up the Spanish language without a major, perhaps violent, fight.

Community Control and the Schools

Another remedy sought by Puerto Ricans -- mainly in New York City -- was decentralization of the school system. We will not remain long on this issue since it is not common or representative of the experience of most other urban Puerto Ricans in the mainland. Nonetheless, we must be mindful of the fact that its impact was, and is still, being felt by over 275,000 Puerto Rican students in New York City.

The push for decentralization emerged with the search for equity and power by poor and minority communities in New York at a historic moment when the assumptions upon which it rested made a great deal of sense to Puerto Ricans. It was that the organization of the school system and the exercise of power within it needed to be changed. If the complex and mammoth school system could be divided into smaller more manageable units, perhaps these smaller units could be more accountable to the local community served. Also, it was believed that more direct involvement in policy and decision making could be sought.

Some change did come about as a result of the decentralization movement. It is especially important to recognize that it brought together Puerto Ricans and Blacks. Together, they assessed the treatment of their children by New York City schools. As a result, new leadership evolved in both communities and alliances were built where they did not exist before. Joint approaches to

the solution of problem areas were also developed. We are yet, however, to see the long range effect of decentralization on the academic achievement of Puerto Rican students. It remains, to this date, more of a nebulous political accomplishment than an educational one.

Some observers of decentralization have suggested that the solution sought has become, today, part of the problem.[44] Nowhere else in the country have Puerto Ricans been so intimately involved in school decentralization as they have in New York City. Nowhere else is there such a pretense that the local community really controls the schools.

School Desegregation

With few exceptions, one of the most debated issue of the past few years within Puerto Rican and other Hispanic communities is school desegregation. Its potential for an adverse effect on bilingual education, and other achievements of the last two decades, is what most concerns Hispanics. Puerto Ricans, in particular, have made serious attempts to interpret the conceptual and philosophical foundation of the desegregation movement, and distinguish the latter from the actual processes of desegregation implementation. This distinction is important as we review the historical background on the issue.

Historically, Hispanics have also suffered from school segregation. This was especially true in the southwest and western region of the country. During the late sixties and the beginning of the seventies, federal courts handling desegregation cases found that the presence of Puerto Rican or Hispanic populations often complicated the fashioning of "remedies" and/or desegregation plans. Occasionally courts were forced to consider how Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic students would be affected by their outcome.

In so doing, the courts discovered that many of the problems confronting

Hispanics in the schools were not different from those of Blacks. They also discovered that there are considerable differences between both groups when it comes to determining the best education approach to correct the harm brought about by acts of segregation. While Blacks have sought integration of the races as a major part of the "remedy," Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have argued that the mere movement of Hispanic students could work against the establishment and maintenance of linguistically and culturally relevant programs.

It is the latter view that has led, in part, to much of the controversy over desegregation between Hispanics, Blacks, the courts, and the schools. The impression has been made that Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics are opposed to desegregation. However, responsible spokepersons for the group argue that the needs of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics can be addressed during the planning and implementation of desegregation programs. They have also argued that bilingual education and desegregation are compatible. Both seek to facilitate equal benefits and equal educational opportunity from the schooling experience.

In fact, a review of bilingual eduation and desegregation litigation will generally show that what Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have opposed is the tendency to see desegregation issues in Black and White only. Desegregation student assignment plans which ignore and discriminate against Hispanics and plans that ignore the bilingual education needs of Hispanic students.[45]

Puerto Rican and other Hispanics also acknowledge and support another view held by many Blacks that desegregation is a means of facilitating the eradication of those attitudes that continue to promote the treatment of Blacks as inferior and as less deserving of the resources and benefits of American society.

They have also embraced the notion that negative racial attitudes against Blacks and Hispanics cannot be dealt with in isolation and through the continued separation of the races, particularly at early ages. The school, as the institution in society with the great impact on the young, must do its share in facilitating the emergence of new racial, social, economic and cultural/linguistic relationships. However, this does not mean that the only way to achieve this is by subscribing to the practice of the "numbers game" played in desegregation planning. Fixed ratios have, more often than not, been misused in desegregation processes.

School desegregation is not happening the easy way. It is often mandated by courts through judges and attorneys that deal in "equity," not "justice," and who are not necessarily free from outside pressures. Quite frequently, they see Hispanic involvement in desegregation cases as attempts to avoid it. In other instances they prefer not to deal at all with their presence and seek refuge in the legal claim that the issues at hand are Black and White.

Those responsible for school districts undergoing mandated desegregation are also obstacles to its implementation. Generally, they will do everything in their power to appeal court decisions and sabotage court-ordered desegregation efforts. Very few will admit to having violated the rights of Blacks or those of other minorities.

Consequently, the implementation of desegregation is upset by many factors. It is usually a very complex and alienating process. The continual growth of minority populations in the inner cities has further complicated desegregation implementation. Schools in such areas are becoming predominantly populated by minority students making it virtually impossible to achieve racial balance in every school as endorsed by desegregation advocates and the courts. New

definitions of desegregated schools are needed. In school districts where racial balance has become numerically impossible, it is evident that some schools will remain totally Black, others Hispanic, and yet others a combination of the two.

Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have also realized that there are no laws in the treatment of their children in desegregation cases. Throughout the federal judicial system, courts have acted on the legal issues at hand and there are very different approaches in treatment depending on the judicial circuit. Hispanics in the Fifth and Tenth Circuits are considered "identifiable ethnic minorities" for desegregation purposes. That is not the case in other circuits where Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have been treated as "non-Blacks" or "White" during desegregation planning and implementation.

The most tragic example of these inconsistencies was the debate during the Boston desegregation case on whether to classify Puerto Rican students as "White" or "Black." In accepting the district's desegregation student assignment plan, the court inadvertently approved the practice of classifying lighter Puerto Ricans as "White" and darker ones as "Blacks." It took aggressive legal and political involvement by the Puerto Rican community before this could be changed.[47]

Discrepancies in the manner in which the courts treat Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics during desegregation are mostly due to the fact that to date the Supreme Court has not addressed the issue. Nonetheless, up to now, Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics have been fairly successful in protecting bilingual interests. The same cannot be said, however, for ineligible Puerto Ricans and Hispanics. It is the treatment of this latter group that may trigger another controversial phase in the school desegregation debate, particularly

in districts with large Puerto Rican and Hispanic populations.

In smaller school districts, Puerto Ricans and Blacks appear to be working together more closely in finding new approaches to desegregation implementation that will equally protect the interests of both. This is the case in places like Lorain, Ohio and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At least in the midwest area, Puerto Rican and other Hispanic leaders have entered into a dialogue with Black leaders in search of new understanding and commonalities. In their efforts at fighting discrimination. Hopefully, this is happening in other parts of the country.

Other Legal Developments Affecting the Education of Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans, like other Hispanics, have often turned to government agencies and the courts for relief when convinced that school districts are non-responsive. We have mentioned some of the instances in which this has happened. During the 1970s there were numerous administrative complaints and class action suits initiated by Puerto Ricans.

Perhaps the most important of these was the Aspira v. Board of Education[48] case decided via a consent decree in 1974. On this occasion, Puerto Ricans were successful in getting bilingual education programs for close to 85,000 Puerto Rican students. However, some serious problems surfaced when, in their haste for a remedy and court decree, Aspira plaintiffs agreed to a bilingual program entrance criteria that involved an inadequate testing process. The purpose of the testing was to identify Hispanic students at all grade levels who did not speak English well enough to be educated in it. Of some 250,000 students tested, close to 85,000 were classified as Spanish dominant, while nearly 25,000 appeared to be dominant in neither Spanish nor English.[49] What then was the district to do with this latter group? Under the decree

these students appeared to have no rights!

The truth is Puerto Ricans were bewildered by the finding of the district's assessment and were hesitant as to how to proceed. The implementation of Aspira then became a difficult and complex process, filled with legal maneuvering by attorneys for the plaintiffs and the district. To a great extent this confused and irritated parents and community leaders alike. The litigation process had clearly gotten out of hand.

Puerto Ricans in New York are still trying to assess the impact of Aspira. Surely, there were some considerable gains -- at least for those children eligible to participate in bilingual programs. But what was to be done to assess the education needs of the more than 100,000 ineligible Puerto Ricans? What specialized services would they receive? Furthermore, what a tragedy to find that 25,000 Puerto Ricans, technically speaking, didn't have a language! The plaintiffs were overwhelmed with the task of monitoring the implementation of services to those eligible under the decree. Little time remained for further needs assessments or planning of better education services for the larger non-bilingual group of students.

The Aspira decree was decided soon after (August 1974) the Supreme Court's ruling in the Lau v. Nichols case.[50] In that case, initiated by San Francisco Chinese parents, the high court had recognized the need for specialized language services for children whose primary language was other than English. But the court did not specifically call for the provision of bilingual education. It suggest that:

> Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice. Giving instruction to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others.[51]

Moreover, Lau supported the then-Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW) in its authority to promulgate rules for the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In question had been a May 25, 1970 Memorandum calling for the provision of special educational services for national origin language minorities with English language "deficiencies." In the immediate aftermath of Lau, its interpreters promoted the thesis that the high Court was only concerned with those language minority students clearly dominant in the native language. Those that were not had no rights under Lau. Hence, the plaintiff's acceptance of the Aspira was motivated by the asumption that they would not get more than what was allowable under the enunciated Lau principles.

Most litigation after Lau, where Puerto Ricans were involved, seem to follow the Aspira precedent. In a way, there was an implicit acceptance of the fact that the courts were also governed by the popular ideology of assimilation and the compensatory approach at correcting student's "deficiencies." Whether right or wrong, attorneys handling Puerto Rican litigation appeared to have accepted the idea that no more than what came out of Lau could be expected from the lower courts. In some court cases, however, Puerto Rican litigation has had national impact in that it has served to refine the once nebulous and ambiguous "bilingual rights" of language minority students. Rios v. Reed[52] and Cintron v. Brentwood Union Free School District[53] are good examples.

The point being made is that litigation brought about by Puerto Ricans has followed in the footsteps of most other bilingual litigation. To date there has been no litigation in which the rights of Puerto Ricans to language and cultural maintenance have been raised or even seriously considered. Thus, Puerto Rican observers of bilingual litigation developments doubt whether the courts are the forum in which the claims of Puerto Ricans for Spanish language

maintenance and development will be resolved.

Enforcement of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has not been a major matter of concern for Puerto Ricans in the east where the most significant bilingual and desegregation accomplishments, with few exceptions, have been made through litigation. Conversely, Puerto Ricans in the midwest region have had to rely considerably on Office for Civil Rights enforcement in their quest for bilingual services. Major Lau compliance plans affecting Puerto Ricans have been developed in Cleveland, Lorain, Youngstown, Chicago, Gary, and Milwaukee. West of that region, no considerable involvement by Puerto Ricans is noticeable, except for recent developments in California. However, as in bilingual litigation, the education aspirations of Puerto Ricans regarding bilingualism and cultural teaching, are far from being promoted through OCR enforcement efforts. Again, because of OCR's reliance on Lau v. Nichols, there is little hope that any complaint would do anything other than ensure the provision of minimal language remedial services.

Another source of authority for the provision of adequate language and cultural services has been state legislation. It is clear, however, that state bilingual education laws are also governed by the assimilationist and compensatory ideologies. None go beyond the minimum rights guaranteed by Lau.

Consequently, there appears to be no better way to accomplish significant gains in the implementation of Puerto Rican education goals than direct involvement and negotiation with state authorities.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to address many issues impacting upon the education of Puerto Rican students in mainland public schools. Some issues were not addressed because they played a secondary role or because, at this time,

they are not a priority for Puerto Ricans. Our apologies for any oversights.

In general, the uniqueness of the Puerto Rican social, political and economic reality, and its implications for the planning and implementation of educational policy, were highlighted. Also noticeable are the commonalities with the educational aspirations and goals of other Hispanic and language minority groups. Hopefully the analysis provided will shed some light on the case being made for language and educational policies that are inclusive of the Puerto Rican aspiration as a people to protect their most distinctive identity traits -- the Spanish language and culture.

Some General Recommendations for Policy Development and Implementation

It is the author's contention that enough coverage has been given to Puerto Rican education concerns and ideological outlooks regarding their future in American Society. A careful reading of this document, and of some of the works cited, would surely provide a general frame of reference for policy development as it specifically relates to Puerto Ricans. Notwithstanding, and at the risk of redundancy, some recommendations are offered. They should be viewed, though, only as guidelines for the improvement of education services within the present framework of the relationship between Puerto Ricans and the schools.

I. Plan of Educational Services

It is advisable for any school districts of state education agency to develop a comprehensive plan of education services for its Puerto Rican population. Such a plan should include a statement of education policy and an approach to implementing such policy, with procedures for planning and evaluation. Involvement by Puerto Rican leadership and parents in the plan's

development is a must if there is to be any degree of acceptance by the Puerto Rican community. A well-developed and explicit document can be very helpful in enlisting the assistance of Puerto Rican organizations, parents and governmental agencies (both here and in Puerto Rico) concerned with the educational future of the group. More specifically, the plan should address, among other things, the following:

- Data Base

It is indispensible to have appropriate and all-inclusive data on the Puerto Rican student population within a school system or state for purposes of adequate planning. Data gathering should be systematic and ongoing due to the high degree of mobility of Puerto Rican students. At the local school level, data should be as individualized as possible and inclusive of achievement scores, language and academic needs assessment, special needs and programmatic placement. In school systems undergoing desegregation, data profiles for each student should indicate school assignment(s) and purpose(s). If specialized education services are to be provided, individualized educational plans (IEPs) are highly recommended. A system for the exchange of data with Puerto Rico's Department of Public Instruction may also need to be developed depending on the migratory patterns of the local Puerto Rican population.

- Education Programming

Eligibility criteria for specialized programming should be developed, again, in conjunction with the local Puerto Rican community. This is crucial to program acceptance. If the school system is not willing to go beyond legally prescribed education remedies (for example, Lau compliance plans or as determined by minimum state requirements), this should be stated. The distinction between what will be offered, versus what Puerto Ricans expect or desire, must be

explained well in order to prevent conflict situations. When bilingual education is part of the plan of services, the nature, type and scope of the program should be made clear.

- Staffing and Acquisition of Qualified Bilingual Staff

A district or state plan should address processes to be used in the acquisition of staff to be involved in providing education services. Special emphasis should be placed on how Puerto Rican staff will be recruited, certifield, trained, assigned, retained and involved in education planning affecting Puerto Rican students as well as in the evaluation and monitoring of program implementation.

- Parent Community Involvement

The plan should provide for the establishment of structures designed to enhance the involvement of Puerto Rican parents in the education system. It should include plans for parent training, parent information dissemination networks and, when possible or available, parent "continuing education" program information.

- Program Monitoring and Evaluation

The plan should clearly indicate how the provision of education services will be monitored and evaluated both for process and impact on actual student learning.

II. Desegregation

In cities and states with significant Puerto Rican and Hispanic populations it has been repeatedly argued that proper desegregation planning and implementation must not hinder, but provide for:

- Adequate representation of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in the design of desegregation plan(s), i.e., in the design of the structures and mechanisms to be used in such processes.

- Recognition of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics as a distinct ethnic/racial minority with unique language and education needs.
- Appropriate identification and assessment of academic and language needs and adequate and accurate maintenance of student records.
- Appropriate identification of Puerto Rican bilingual staff and specific plans for their involvement or differentiated assignment, during desegregation planning and implementation.
- Distinct plans for the assignment and/or reassignment of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic students. Often districts tend to classify students as non-Blacks and assign them to schools in the same manner they do Whites. This undermines the rights of Hispanics to bilingual education programming and can result in the weakening or destruction of such programs. It can also result in the discriminatory dispersal of Hispanic students and a disregard for their cultural and education needs.
- Appropriate design of necessary bilingual and other culturally relevant programs.
- Expansion, when necessary, of bilingual and other culturally relevant programs.
- Continual recruitment and hiring of Puerto Rican and bilingual staff.
- Involvement of Puerto Rican and other Hispanic students in innovative and specialized programs such as "magnet" or "specialty" schools. (Often, these programs are designed only with Blacks and Whites in mind. Hispanics have been systematically kept from participation in these programs. While English proficient Hispanics are clearly eligible for participation, other Hispanics can also participate if "magnet" and

"specialty" schools have a "bilingual" component).

- Involvement of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics in evaluation and monitoring of desegregation processes.
- Adequate dissemination of information relative to desegregation in the Spanish language, as well as appropriate notification to Hispanic parents whose children may be affected by desegregation implementation.
- Appropriate monetary allocations for the establishment, continuation and/or expansion of bilingual and other culturally relevant programs.

III. Legislation

Bilingual and culturally supportive legislation is also an important need. It is beneficial to Puerto Ricans and other language groups, and to school districts and states with significant language group populations. School boards, school administrators and state education officials should help write, promote and implement necessary legislation with adequate financial backing.

IV. Other

Finally, in school districts and states with significant Puerto Rican populations, an all-out effort should be made to familiarize the general population with the social, historical and cultural background of Puerto Ricans. This can be done through the use of media and through the development of an adequate plan, at state and local levels, for information dissemination.

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Appendix I

A Suggested List of Possible Areas of Conflict During the Concurrent Implementation of Race and National Origin Desegregation Plans*

The following list is more suggestive of the conflict or problem areas that may arise as racé desegregation planning and implementation impacts upon the provision of services to national origin minority (NOM) students, both those eligible for participation in language or bilingual programs and those NOM students not eligible for participation in language or bilingual programs. While not in any particular order, they continue to be important issues for consideration during the concurrent implementation of both race and national origin legal mandates.

A. Identification/Definition

1. Failure by school system to identify NOM students and staff populations in the district and/or by school.

2. Practice by the courts, the state or the school district to define NOM students as non-Black during race desegregation implementation (e.g., defining Hispanics as "white" or as part of the non-Black class rather than affording them status as an "identifiable ethnic language minority."

3. Practice by districts to distinguish between NOM students eligible for bilingual programming and those not eligible with itent to use the latter as "white" during race desegregation implementation.

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* This list was prepared by the author for a consultation on the interface between race and national origin desegregation held in Chicago (June 1980). Because of its applicability to the Puerto Rican experience with desegregation, it is included here. Hopefully, policy makers can draw from its critique of proglem areas in desegregation planning and implementation.

4. Courts, states and districts' insistence on defining a desegregated school or district along Black/white lines when there are considerable non-Black ethnic language minorities present; i.e., tri-ethnic or multi-ethnic districts where perhaps a Hispanic student population is as substantial as the Black or white population.

B. Fixed Ratios

1. The imposition of court or state fixed ratios for purposes of defining desegregated schools (especially when these are defined along Black/white lines).

2. The existence of federal regulations which force upon receiving and/or affected school districts set minority ratios as a condition for funding race desegregation program efforts; e.g., ESAA regulations.

C. Race Desegregation Planning

1. Race desegregation planning when done with Blacks and whites only in spite of NOM students presence in the district.

2. School district's data gathering practices when done in Black and white only.

3. School district's evaluation and research on success when done in Black and white only.

4. School district's research on "dropouts," suspensions, violence, etc., when done in Black and white only, (e.g., dropout studies done during desegregation more often than not fail to include or analyze data on NOM students and only report in Black and white.

5. Failure by school districts to disseminate adequate information on race and national origin desegregation efforts to the parents of NOM students in their native language and/or in a language understandable to them, during district/school planning of desegregation.

6. Failure by district to involve NOM administrative and instructional staff in the planning, implementation and monitoring of race desegregation efforts.

D. Desegregation Strategies/Logistics

1. Closing of combined minority (Black and NOM) schools with no regard for the distinct education needs of NOM students.

2. Closing of predominantly NOM populated schools as a means to force NOM student involvement in a race desegregation effort.

3. The selection by school districts of sites for the placement of bilingual education programs that may prevent NOM involvement in desegregation or further segregate NOM students -- and programs aimed at

said students -- in already predominantly Black and/or minority schools.

4. The establishment of other NOM student oriented programs, e.g., cultural/ethnic programs, in predominantly Black and/or minority schools.

5. The creation of "magnet," "speciality" or "vocational" schools that exclude both limited-English-proficient (LEP) and non-bilingual eligible students. NOM students do not have equal access and participation (e.g., "magnet" schools created where ratios are set for Black and white participants only, to the exclusion of Hispanics and other ethnic language groups.)

6. Failure by school districts to make specific references to and/or include a component(s) in the race desegregation plan that addresses the needs of NOM student populations, both bilingual and non-bilingual needs (e.g., desegregation plans more often than not fail to make any mention of legal and educational mandates they may have to comply with as they affect language programming for Hispanic and other ethnic language group students.) The also fail to make reference to educational plans they may have (or should) consider for Hispanic students not participating in bilingual programs.

7. Failure by districts to continue or expand specialized English language instruction programs legally required for NOM English dominant students identified as "underachievers" who have been reassigned for race desegregation purposes.

8. Failure by school districts to acquire, place and/or promote NOM staff to key administrative positions during race desegregation implementation (e.g., during administrative reorganization of a district occasioned by race desegregation mandates, few, if any, Hispanics are promoted to central administration posts as compared to Blacks or whites.)

9. Lack of policy on the assignment and best utilization of NOM staff during concurrent implementation of race and NOM desegregation; failure by district to define the status of NOM instructional and supportive staff (aides, counselors, etc.), during said implementation, specifically as it relates to seniority rules and staff retention during overall staff cut-backs or reduction (e.g., districts rarely negotiate with teachers unions "contractual clauses" that would guarantee the retention of bilingual staff at times of declining student enrollment.)

10. Pairing of schools during race desegregation with no regard to the bilingual or other distinct education needs of NOM students.

11. Changing of school feeder patterns with no regard for NOM bilingual program participants nor with the need for continuity of such programs.

12. The exemption of predominantly NOM schools with bilingual programs from participation in race desegregation implementation.

13. The designing of desegregation "human relations" programs with no regard to the presence of NOM students in the district; the absence of NOM staff from the administration of such programs; the failure by such programs to sensitize all groups (Black, white, Hispanic and other ethnic groups) as to the race desegregation plan and its impact on NOM programs/students; failure to provide "human relations" in-service to NOM students/staff moved or reassigned during desegregation implementation.

E. NOM Student Assignment

1. The lack of a "student assignment plan" for NOM students in the context of, or in coordination with, the district's race desegregation assignment plan.

2. Failure by districts to assess NOM students language needs prior to reassignment for desegregation purposes, i.e., to meet race desegregation "racial balance" requirements.

3. Failure by the district to ensure "clustering" of NOM bilingually eligible students for purposes of facilitating viable bilingual programs.

4. Arbitrary dispersement of NOM students not eligible for bilingual education during race desegregation implementation without regard for other cultural and language consideration; failure by districts to facilitate reasonable "clustering" of such students as opposed to total isolation in predominantly Black and white majority schools.

F. Special Education for the Handicapped

1. Failure by federal agencies, the courts and the state to require districts involved in race desegregation to design a specific management plan for the treatment of NOM students suspected of or identified as having bilingual special education needs.

G. Funding

1. Failure by districts to make specific and distinct allocations of resources for the provision of NOM services during desegregation in ways that will prevent conflict or desired allocations between NOM and Black desegregation advocates.